skeleton

THE NORTH-EASTS MUSIC MAGAZINE.

LOCAL BAND special!

issue no.3

40p

THE CLASH ON MANOEUVRES

ATHLETICO SPIZZ '80

wah!

heat

HELTER SKELTER

EDITOR
Mal Armstrong

LAYOUT
Christine Condliffe

ARTWORK
Roy Weatherley

CONTRIBUTORS
T.H. Bogart
Allan Robinson
Colin Green
Sam Blewitt
Mark Inmonger

Wah! Heat.....page 3
In which Allan Robinson meets up with the first band out of Liverpool since Gerry and The Pacemakers.
The Clash.....page 6
In which Colin Green dons his combat jacket and meets Joe Strummer, who knows about these things.
The Helter Skelter Local Band Special.....pagelo
In which Newcastle's finest are put under the microscope and T.H.Bogart has a nervous breakdown.
Athletico Spizz 80.....page27
In which Mark Inmonger meets Captain Kirk and loses a friend.

Plus all the usual rubbish like cartoons, crossword, letters. You know the kind of thing.

A CRAZY PROJECT publication...86 Nile st., Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

POSTERS - PRINTS

The largest range of posters in the world (Over 6000 titles) right on your doorstep

NEARLY NEW LP's BOUGHT AND SOLD
The Most Expensive in the Business — But the Best!
OVER 5000 TITLES

DIFFERENT CARDS WITHOUT GREETINGS
SNOOPY GREETINGS CARDS/BOOKS & MERCHANDISE
INCENSE OILS AND STICKS — MOD JEWELLERY
ALSO TAROT CARDS

KARD BAR
ARCADIA OFF PERCY ST.
NEWCASTLE
OPEN SIX DAYS 9.30-5.30

wah! Heat

If there's one thing that irks me about the current state of the mainstream Rock Press, it's the often irritating and sometimes divisive practice of cocooning bands of local musicians into neat, acceptable little corrals and calling them 'Scenes'. So far, in the wake of the 76/77 New Wave explostion we've had 'scenes' from Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Coventry... fill in your own personal favourite. I can't wait until North Shields name comes up, whereupon I will crawl from the woodwork and bask in my 15 minutes of neo-messianic fame, and be hailed as THE true visionary of North Tyneside. Some bloody chance.

Yes, sports fans, 'scenes' are here to stay, whether you belong to one or not. Scene of the month appears to be Liverpool, and let's hear it for those loveable scousers who rejoice in such amusing, confusing, or just plain daft monikers as The Teardrop Explodes, Echo & The Bunnymen, Dalek I, Tommy Quickley & The Remo Four, ...oops, wrong decade!

I'd personally be well bottled off with Liverpool's current crop of bands if they turned out to be zingy names and little else, but you'd have to be a Melody Maker writer not to admire the undoubted quality of most of the 'Pools latest outfits. And to me, one of the brightest new hopes to emerge over the last few months has been the band Wha! Heat.

The first time I ever heard the band was on John Peel's show, when everyone's favourite scouser premiered their debut single, "You'd Better Scream", on their own Inevitable lable. What I heard was a dynamite piece of apocalyptic pop, ringing Byrdsian guitar offset against a rolling bass figure and dark, atmospheric keyboard textures, the perfect musical backdrop to a set of colourful, allusive lyrics, based essentially on the second-coming of Christ in Cuba, but with such ambiguity that the lyrics would fit any world crisis, be it the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, or Carter's attempts to free the hostages in Iran. If you've not got it, beg borrow or steal a copy.

Supposed Psychedelics stay independent to talk to Allan Robinson.

The Wha! Heat mainman is Pete Wylie, and recent articles have tended to paint him as a bit of an egomaniac, hung up on the sound of his own voice, with the other members of the band struggling to get a word in edgeways. When I spoke to Wylie, however, he wasn't the big-headed bastard I'd been led to believe, and his musical cohorts were not without something to say, either.

Pete Wylie once shared a stage with two other emergent Liverpudlian talents, Julian Cope, now vocalist with Teardrop Explodes (If you ain't got their 'Treason' single, then you ain't got a record collection), and Ian McCullogh, guiding light of Echo & The Bunnymen, in a band which went under the handle of The Crucial Three. A stalwart of Eric's club in Liverpool, Wylie also helped put out a fanzine-cum-newsletter advertising local gigs, musicians, etc, which came to nothing, entitled 'More Or Less'. Now he's fronting an outfit with drummer Rob Jones, bassist Washington, and, on occasions, the enigmatic Reg Redmond on second guitar, and sometime synth player, King Bluff.

Seeing as how Wylie has been bracketed in with his ex-musical and fellow Liverpudlian cronies, I wondered where he saw Wah! Heat in relation to them, and what sort of relationships the band shared with their scouse cohorts:

"We have sort of

personal relationships with them, some of them are friends, some are kind of enemies. There's quite a lot of bitching, but it's not altogether nasty; there's a lot of 'edging each other onwards'. There is quite a bit of factionalising, but it never gets really heavy."

For a band in Wah! Heat's position, with their debut 45 having occupied a healthy position in the alternative charts for quite some time now, a potent session for the John Peel show having been aired numerous times, and quite a lot of (mostly favourable) press, you'd think that their Logical Next Step would be the securing of a lucrative recording deal with a Major Company, big U.K. tour, drugs, massage parlours, the works. Although the band have been made tempting offers from some of the Industry's Big Names, rather than take them up, they've kept a low profile for much of the summer's duration,

releasing a new 45, 'Seven Minutes To Midnight', in September and confined their gigs to the odd low-key one-off. Pete outlined his reasoning thus:

"We decided that rather than blunder on, we'd re-think how we wanted the band to sound; we wanna sharpen up rather than just go on with the same kinda thing. We're pissed off with the kinda stuff we're playing 'cos it's so...basic. We're trying to get the feel right. It's like when you do gigs, you gotta work with an inependent sound guy, who doesn't owe you anything - I mean he's working for you - but if things aren't EXACTLY right, he's not going to be bothered. And you get a fairly orthodox sound mix as well, and the way we want it is to have things going up and down, and in and out; not exactly like dub, but the principles of dub. We want various textures in the band's sound, but at the moment it's on the one level."

If the Rock Press is fond of creating scenes, it is also more than fond

of fabricating non-existant revivals or renewals of outplayed trends which should've been left in the dumper for good, viz., The Mod Revival, The New Wave of Heavy Metal (The Sound of the Social Clubs, and the 'new wave' slogan a massive contradiction if ever there was one). So when people start bandying the word 'Psychedelia' around, I frankly wonder how these people earn their crusts perpetrating this crap. Liverpool's newest bands seem to be hamstrung by this adjective - probably because they don't fit into any handy little box.

Pete: "Yeah, that difference is one of the Liverpool bands' strengths. Other 'movements' have tended to be a bit samey. There's a lot of talk about Psychedelia..."

King Bluff: "It's shite!"

Pete: "Yeah.. It's just funny, nasty music, that's all. Plus, we don't take drugs!"

You can't really think of Liverpool as a musical force without harking back to the days of Merseybeat, sorry, Mairseybeat, the days of The Fourmost, The Searchers, Cilla, and what was that other band? Oh, yes, The Beetles. Fact is, there's an increasing feeling to view those days through rose-tinted specs, and forget that there were some quite godawful bands knocking about under the Merseybeat umberella, and it hasn't been until the last two years or so that Liverpool has found its feet again as a musical force.

Newcastle faces the same problem. After all, in 10 years what have we had to crow about? Linda's Farm? Sting? Bugger all else.

But I digress. Onstage, Wah! Heat are mightily impressive. Moving through a white-noise type intro, jokingly entitled, 'Anything Can Happen In The Next Half-Hour", they stormed through 'You Better Scream", then played a selection of Wah! Heat hits, showing that here was a band destined for Big Things, generating the sort of electricity that the best bands have had when they were first starting out, like Dexy's when me and about 14 others saw them trounce the Poly earlier this year.

Pete Wylie and Reg Redmond's guitar styles melded together beautifully, screeching shards of diamond hard guitar bouncing off each other, Washington's bass hitting the pump peak, His Highness King Bluff adding the right amount of Keyboard Kolour, and the look of perverse glee on drummer Rob Jones' face had to be seen to be believed as he belted 7 shades of shit from his kit. "Don't Step On The Cracks", dedicated to our own Likely Lad, Bob Ferris was likewise a barnstorm, and even their slighter songs, such as "Somesay", were delivered with the kind of fire and conviction not seen in a band since Punk's early days.

Back to the interview, though. The sore point of Pete's allegedly 'preachy' stance comes up. At the series of 'hicks from the sticks' type gigs put on at the ICA in early June, critics got the knives out for Pete over his merciless haranguing of the 'cool' London audience. However, it's not just a case of provincial boy mouthing off in his moment of glory:

"Yeah, I've been accused of preaching. I'm really just trying to say to people 'Don't think in straight lines - you can always find alternatives.' Sometimes you've gotta go over the top to make a point. I love Dexy's Midnight Runners - they're one of the most valid bands at the moment, because they take their stance to the limit."

Anything worth doing is worth overdoing!

"Yeah. That's why we don't mind people walking out on us or anything, 'cos those who see the point of what we're doing, even at this early stage, instinctively they'll feel something, and they're the ones that'll stay. Even if we never did turn out to be chart-toppers, it wouldn't matter if we had a strong core of people who really believed in what we were doing."

Being heralded in some quarters as the Next Big Thing can have an adverse effect on a band, especially in a band like Wah! Heat, who are still in their musical infancy, and have yet to crystallise their sound sufficiently to satisfy all members of the outfit. Does Pete Wylie feel this pressure?

"Yeah, we feel a lot of it. That's another reason why we're taking the break. We did the ICA gig not to make a good point or anything, just so's people would know and remember us. Even if they hated us, they won't forget that gig."

So, Wah!Heat are at a vital turning point in their career. Their lay off from public scrutiny might have proven damaging to the ground they've already broken, or there again, they could come back as an even more potent force. I think the latter is the more likely to happen - 'cos the band displayed such undoubted musical flair and strength of personality to cut through and be one of the '80s Major Names.

But are YOU gonna be there with them?

THE CLASH

ON MANOEUVRES

I. the battle

It was after dark as we crept behind the main body of troops. My combat jacket was soaked with sweat, my brow was streaming; I felt sick - the tension was almost too much to take. "Do you think we'll make it," Mick whispered in my ear. Fortified with more than my fair share of Watney's Red Barrel, I had no hesitation in answering "Yes".

So this was it, the scene of our last battle, which was fought at the now famous battleground the MAYFAIR. We were the front-line, the thin red line, fighting for the secret army disguised as a fanzine, and Joe Strummer, leader of the Clash, was our target.

Plan A was to hit the rear guard. These were the crack troops, especially trained by the SAS, and were no mean task, easily recognisable in their uniforms of black bow-ties, dinner jackets and bullshit proof vests (which, strangely, made them look like gorillas,) and confronted them.

"Hey, I'm doing an article on violence at Rock Concerts. How do you feel about all the kids fighting and spitting?"

"UH! I'm just here to keep the peace," he defended.

Sneaking past, emptying my magazine at them, we succeeded in passing them. In the heart of the battle, we made a thorough sweep of the area, but our target was nowhere to be found. Had our attack been in vain? Had we wasted our precious ammunition? Would we have to return to HQ empty handed? Just as the pangs of defeat set in, someone shouts "Who are you?"

My God! We were cornered by Joe's second in command, manager Ray, the final hurdle. Pointing my notebook straight at his guts, I informed him we were here to get Joe.

"You've got no chance. People have tried and have left broken men." After interrogating him for what seemed an eternity, he finally broke. He disappeared and returned minutes later, informing us that his leader would speak.

Loading up our notebooks with specially-designed questions manufactured at our secret lab in Gateshead, we were ready. A faint smell of sweat lingered in the air, caused by the anticipation of what was to come. Faces were taut filled with thoughts, palms perspired, nervous tension was released with some small talk.

Our troop was ready - all our training would be tested within the next thirty minutes.

Lt. Colin Green (f.a.n.) meets Gen. Joe Strummer (s.t.a.r.) for an interview(ette)

2. the interrogation

After waiting for over an hour, Joe Strummer finally graced our cigarette-strewn table. He had waited until the last of the fans had made their drunken way home. He seemed to be enjoying every minute, playing the Rock Star up-on-a-pedestal image.

When he sat down and started rapping, I was surprised to find him just the opposite. He spoke in a soft, quiet voice, coming over as an amiable sort of bloke who has an insatiable appetite for what's going on around him. I asked him why it had been so long since The Clash played in Newcastle.

"Well, we're banned from the City Hall," he answered, "and after our last gig at the polytechnic, they banned us as well. And after the violence here tonight, I don't think the Mayfair will let us play here again either."

The violence which seems to follow The Clash around upsets Joe very much; in fact, just TALKING about it seems to upset him very much.

"If trouble starts, we stop playing and ask the bouncers to try and control the offenders. As for the gobbing, I've just got to put up with it even though I don't like it - but who does?"

Had he enjoyed the gig that night though?

"Yeah, it was really good after the crowd had settled down and we could get down to what ouselves and the vast majority of the fans were there for - music!"

I asked Joe about the band's experiences in America and how he compared US and UK audiences.

"We went over to play a few small gigs and the whole thing exploded into something we never expected. The audiences over there are pretty timid, not moving or going wild like the British do, but there wasn't any fighting either. Really though, I don't like America very much."

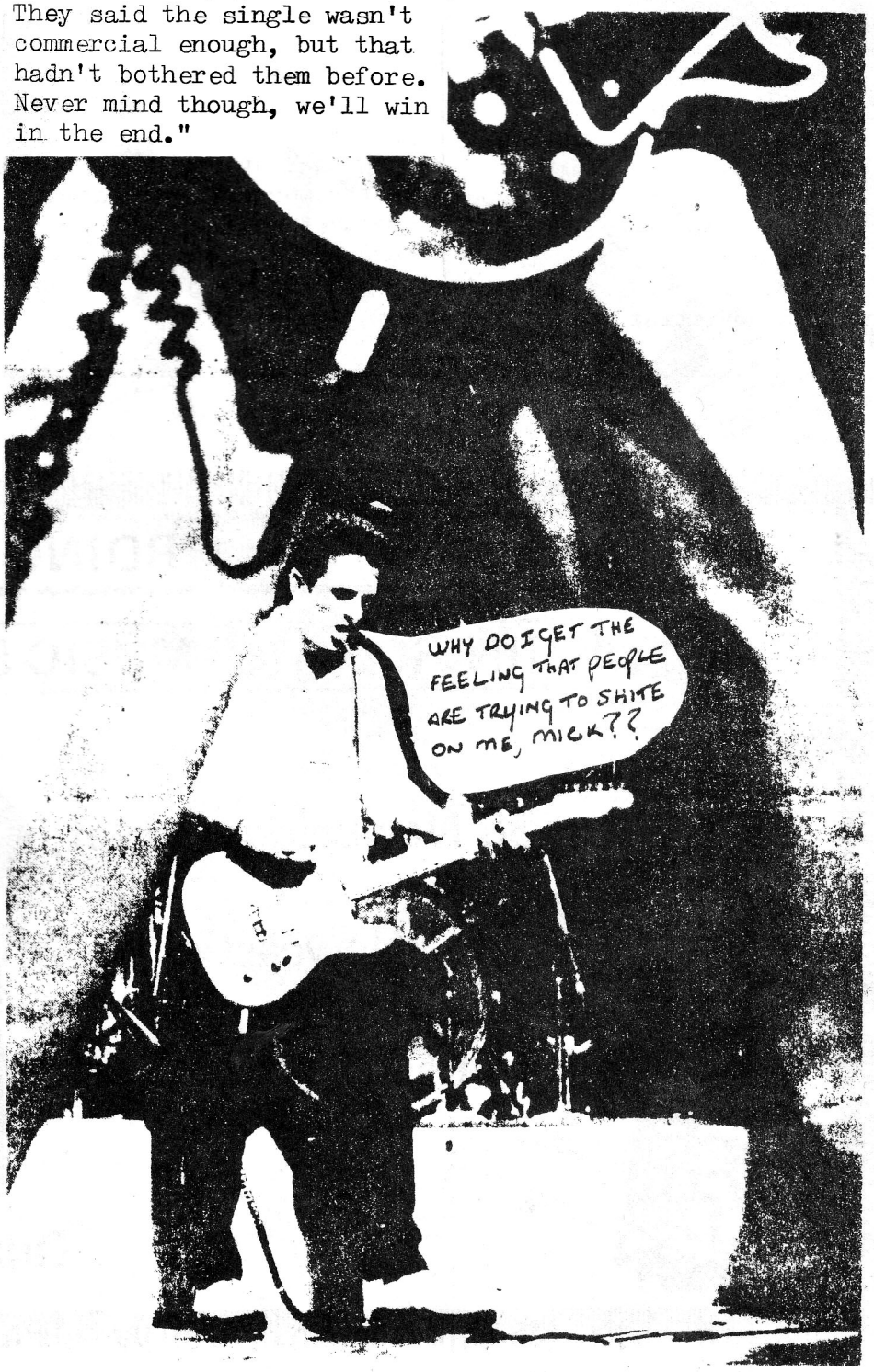
On asking Joe about 'Bank Robber', and the hassel the band had with getting it released, he aired his dissatisfaction with his record company.

"CBS really piss me off. They said the single wasn't commercial enough, but that hadn't bothered them before. Never mind though, we'll win in the end."

Some time ago, rumour filtered through that Joe was intending to put together an alternative rock programme on TV. So what happened to that idea, Joe?

"Yeah, I seemed to be the only one interested. Everyone I contacted didn't seem to be bothered, so it didn't get off the ground."

At this point, a number of people were indicating that it was time for Joe to think about heading back to London, and time for us to piss off. So we did.



3. the aftermath

It seems a shame that it's more than likely we will not see The Clash playing in Newcastle again. I doubt that it will cause mass hysteria, or send people crawling for a bottle of barbituates, but whether it's The Clash or Frank Sinatra, it's a crying shame that so many have to suffer because of so few.

The violence at the Mayfair was nothing short of disgusting. It seems that nowadays the audience wants to BE the band. So what can be done? Knock the stage down and let the mental retards jump around the floor with the band? Or just forget the band and advertise 'Come to the venue - the best fights in town! - Special reductions for parties!

The violence at their gigs is slowly but surely wearing The Clash down. You can see it in Joe Strummer's face: a look of hopelessness at the very mention of it. And I don't believe the Clash have brought this on themselves.

The band now play a set which runs for close on two hours, pulling samplers from all their albums, their singles, and just enough new material. On stage, the focus is definitely on Strummer as he is totally involved with his performance, belting lyrics out as if possessed and enjoying every sweat-soaked minute of it. Strummer and Mick Jones seem at odds with each other on stage, the latter more at home parading around the stage as a guitar hero and smiling at the young female fans at the front of the stage.

All in all, the Clash have streamlined their set and cut out the ragged parts and are nothing less than a bloody good rock'n'roll outfit.

I finally asked General Strummer to give a parting quote to round the article off, and as message to his fans he told me "Music is my soul, and the only thing that lifts my heart."

Colin Green

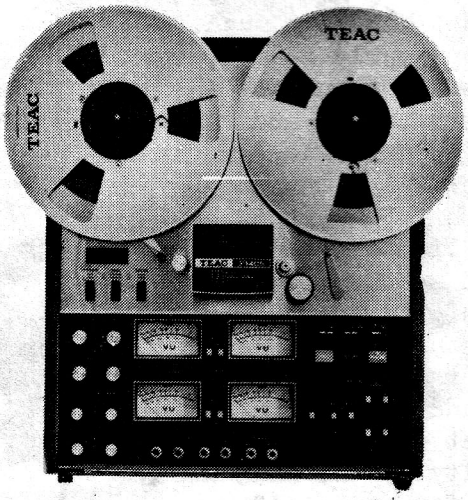
BASEMENT RECORDING STUDIOS

(IN RONNIES MUSIC SHOP)

158 Newbridge Street,

Newcastle.

TELEPHONE 22331



Quality – 4 – Track

ON A BEAUTIFUL DAY
PEACE WAS SHATTERED
SCREAM!
THE CROWDS WERE STILLED...
RSW. 11.10.80.
EXCEPT..
..FOR..
..ONE.
AIA
NOT QUITE AS I'D PLANNED.
HOWEVER THIS WOULD DO.
YOUNG HERBY TONGUE PUT A SMALL BLUE PHIAL TO HIS MOUTH.....
...AND...
BA
.... CHANGED?
THEN SPED OFF TO INVESTIGATE THE SCREAMS.
OUTA MY WAY NO-NECK!
SO THAT'S IT, SOME KID ON THE GRASS.
BAM
BAM
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
KEEP OFF

The HELTER SKELTER
LOCAL BAND SPECIAL

Who's Who and What's What in Newcastle 1980

And we thought this was gonna be easy!! If you want to know the REAL reason why there's been a megalithic gap between this issue and its predecessor, then look no further than the coverage of the hordes of local bands contained on the following pages. Really, once we got started on this project - the awesome dimensions of which we had no idea at the kick-off - it looked as though we might still be at it in a couple of years time. Bogart, for instance, described his own involvement as one of the most difficult tasks he's ever had to tackle (which tells us absolutely nothing), and Allan Robinson managed to cover somewhere in the region of a staggering twenty five gigs in a one-month period. For my own part, I discovered a new disease which is best described as 'Interrogation Lag', the symptoms of which are subtle, but which usually appear in the form of memory lapses (i.e. forgetting the name of the person you're talking to in mid-sentence, or sometimes the name of the band; sometimes even what it was you asked) and/or an inability to arrange future meetings. (Ask Danger In Paradise about this one. I apologise most sincerely to them but after we eventually met even more problems arose. Sorry, Anth, but big feature in the next issue may make amends. Give me a ring and I'll arrange it!!!)

What made it all worthwhile, however, was the fact that there is so much good music being made in the area, and with so much variation in style and method. At last when I visit friends in London and they hit me with the misconception that 'All that comes out of Newcastle is Heavy Metal and Brown Ale', I'll be able to prove them wrong.

The sad thing to emerge from the excercise was that not only are there far too few venues for bands to appear at, but even they seem to be dropping off one by one. You'd think that someone, somewhere, who is involved locally and makes money out of rock'n'roll (S&N Breweries? Mecca? Vaux Breweries? Rock City? Impulse?) would plough just a teensy-weensy bit of cash into something that could be run along the lines of Liverpool's 'Eric's' or Leeds' 'F' Club. Meanwhile, don't hold your breath while you're waiting for them to do something.

We're trying to gain a little bit of attention for the area by putting out a cassette 'album' of local bands (see 'Helter Skeltering' at the back for details) but it would be nice for someone with cash to put it where it would be most useful.

Finally, apologies to all those bands who, for one reason or another, are not featured herein. Don't despair, this will probably overflow into the next issue. Oh yeah, and congratulations to Hot Snax on the release of their new single, 'Theme From A Movie'. I enjoyed it a lot.

Well, I'm off to Africa for a month (true, believe it or not). After being involved in this feature, believe me, I've earned it!

Mal Armstrong

Monoconics

I don't know why, but I've alway's had this unreasoned affection for three piece bands. Hendrix' Gypsies, Cream, The Police, The Jam and, more recently, Prefab Sprout are all amongst my personal faves; sometimes, I think, for no other reason than that they manage, as a triumvirate, to sound a million times more potent than a whole battalion of ELOs or Mahavishnu Orchestras could ever hope to.

Add to that list the jerky, quirky, psychologically murky pop of the excellent Monoconics. Featuring lean and deranged-looking Denny Pooley on guitar, talkative Graham Cusak on drums, and bopping bassman Dave Green, The Monoconics do a lot more than fill the void between the art-school meanderings of Wire and the mixed up confusion of early Talking Heads.

They've already went some considerable way in establishing themselves nationally with a successful appearance at London's ICA earlier this year, and an agreeable session on John Peel's much-coveted radio show. The imminent release of their debut single should see them gaining the sort of recognition they so rightly deserve but, so far, hasn't arrived.

The Monoconics take their music very seriously indeed but claim that they'd much rather see people dancing at their gigs than sitting around digesting the more cerebral aspects of their sound. They do, however, claim that much of their material contains a message, but refuted my suggestion that they might be a little on the heavy side as far as the lyrics go. (Although one song which concerned itself with a chap dousing himself with petrol, igniting it, and then feeling upset because no-one turned up to see him do it, is hardly likely to send you home laughing.)

As with every band up here, they're plagued with all the sort of unnecessary problems which detract from the main idea of producing good music, i.e. shortage of gigs, lack of funds, etc, but suggested that local further education establishments and people like S&N Breweries could, if they so desired, help alleviate the chronic gig shortage in these parts at the very least.

A thinking band with almost as many good ideas as T.H.Bogart. If you don't go and see them, then you probably don't deserve them.

Mal Armstrong

Sharplicks

I'd expected a more traditional band than the Sharplicks with which I was confronted. It must have been the name which fooled me and some of my compatriates in the audience too, for most displayed healthy heads of hair and a penchant for denim. Sharplicks, however, are a little more sneaky than the average bear, Bobo!

This particular line-up of Sharplicks (the band describe it as Sharplicks no.5) has been existing for only a few months, but various connotations have been appearing for a good year or so. Their founder and mentor is Ray Sharp (guitar/vocals) and he seems to have put together a band who, in their own words, ssound like a cross between T.Rex and Bill Nelson's Red Noise. I would tend to agree with them too, although they're probably a little too quaint to compare themselves with Red Noise.

They certainly attack their set with some panache, and a fine group of musicians exist in Ian Durey (bass), Mick Barclay (synth/keyboards) and Graham Lant (drums), all of whom hail from Forest Hall and the Coast.

Ray Sharp told me of a trilogy of songs he had written, entitled 'Tronic 1', Tronic 2' and 'Mask', all of which are concerned with the rise and fall of a Master Computor apres they drop the BIGGY! Ray also explained some of the supernatural meanings in his songs, and claimed that "all Newcastle's musicians hate me".

An independent single is due soon, and for all Redneck readers, some of the band sport a fair amount of make-up, but confirmed that the closet door is firmly locked behind them. The Sharplicks' motto is "I'll get you at playtime". Good group, though.

T.H.Bogart

Fanheater

Late 1979 saw Fanheater playing London's prestige pubs and clubs. (Greasy holes actually; have you ever seen The Nashville.) They decided, in their own words, "That the material was sufficiently strong and purposeful to adopt a serious approach as a musical enterprise."

Well!!!.. stroke my hair and call me Frankie!

Fanheater consists of Dave Sturge, Derek Underhill, Chris Murtagh and Neil Armstrong, and they appear to be taking one small step for Man, a giant leap..etc, because they are, at this very minute, completing a successful string of gigs in New York (not the Whitley Bay one) i.e. The Big Apple, Land of the Free, etc. (Gasp!)

Supposedly, Fanheater made a demo tape at London's Brittania Row Studios, and from this these callow youths to excite those oh-so-excitable colonials.

Pardon me?..OH, are they worth perusing before they enter the postal-bookings-only class? Oh, yes!

Fanheater describe themselves as being 'New Psychdelia', but my reference point would be New Yorkers like Talking Heads, because Fanheater are - at times - very similar.

I thought Neil Armstrong was particularly spiffing as their main singer, even though he'd left his space suit at home. It was actually cute to see a group suddenly pull themselves apart at the musical seams and quickly zip themselves up and continue to bounce along. (They were interesting, OK?)

The group intimated that they'd like to have lots of fams. So what are you waiting for out there?

T.H.Bogart

Blueport Records

Blueport Records was formed in the region of three years ago by the auspicious, periodically deranged Mike Maurice, with the release of The Youngbucks' "Get Your Feet Back On The Ground" c/w "Cold, Cold Morning" (Blu 1).

So many bands were leaving the area for the bright lights and big deals of London, only to call it a day when the realities of the Rock'n'Roll Biz hit them, that Mike thought that a Newcastle-based independent lable was just what the world needed.

Spurred on by the success of The Youngbucks' platter, and suffering from delusions that "it was all gonna happen in Newcastle", a batch of three Blueport singles were thrust onto an unsuspecting world: The Sabrejets' debut "Radioland"; Mike, Slot and Bumper's "Mike Slot & Bumper Play Amazin' R&B" E.P.; and American Echoes' "Las Vegas".

The hope was that one of these discs would actually sell a few copies, thus allowing Blueport to plough its profits into more local bands, and thus put Newcastle on the Music Biz map.

Astonishingly, this almost happened. "Las Vegas" began picking up good reviews and quite a bit of radio airtime-including Radio One's D.L.T making it his 'Single Of The Week, and NME doing likewise-but a bad distribution deal with Phonogram soon put the damper on any more progress being made.

The details of the Phonogram fiasco are too lengthy and much too sordid to detail here, so it's enough to say that it left everyone at the Blueport end of things totally pissed off with the major record companies, Mike describing the scene as a "hell broth of evil".

Nevertheless, Blueport are still interested in hearing tapes of local bands with a view to putting out more Blueport product in the near future, so if it's advice, promotion, or criticism you need, or if you've got a couple of grand to spare, contact them at 52 Kelvin Grove, Sandyford, Newcastle, and I've no doubt they'll be helpful. Or tell you to piss off.

Mal Armstrong

Holy Toast

Does anyone remember The Dementia Praecox? The band consisted of Steve Savage, vocals, and Winkie on keyboards and assorted noises, and they used to play at the Gosforth Hotel on Monday nights, as well as various other events. The two parted due to apathy/indifference, but after months of meaningless fads, fashions, musical combos and turmoil, the twosome amalgamated again and were joined by the Cooper bros., Tim (bass) and Dave (lead guitar). The foursome practiced, but found it difficult to get it together without a drummer. Enter Bobby (ex-Speed/All Enquiries) and lo! the birth of Holy Toast.

The band have been together for six months now, and although they haven't played many gigs, they've built up a reasonable reputation.

When I spoke to Steve Savage (a.k.a. The Goon), the band were planning a few projects, one being the release of a single, another being the possibilty of a cassette album.

I was told by Mr Savage that Holy Toast "basically began as Newcastle's answer to 2-Tone, but mutated into what we are after discovering reggae. Our music is about rhythm, the bass and drums especially."

And influences?

"The band is mainly influenced by Lee Perry, Prince Far I and PiL, to a certain extent, because they have the same roots as us", adding that in no way are they PiL copyists.

Holy Toast can be contacted for gigs, etc, on 043 471 2171 (the Cooper bros)

Colin Green

Official Secrets

This bundle describe themselves as performers of 'blatant pop'. I saw the Official Secrets at The Viking, Jarrow (what a good place for a gig!), and would describe them more as 'pugilistic pop', with reference to say The Stranglers first album (they recite 'Duchess' for good measure), all of which they play with mucho snow and humour supplied by Col Younger (vocals/guitar) and their very excellent drummer, Mark Frazer. All members of the group come from the Jarrow/South Shields axis, and the two other participants not yet mentioned are Dave Black (guitar) and Brian Puech (bass).

They have plenty of original material to entertain you with, all being similar to the trasning style previously illustrated, and da boiys intend to make demo tapes as soon as possible.

Col Younger is their front-person type member, and very efficient he is too, providing enough mirth and focus to keep the heads of the audience pointing the correct way most of the time.

As the band has only been in existance for a few months they still seem to be in the process of getting themselves thouroughly sorted out, but they do wind up their set with a fabulously frantic reading of 'Land Of A Thousand Dances', which is a solid 99 on the ol' clapometer, folks!

Mananana...nananana...hey..

T.H.Bogart

Aidan Cant

Thanks to John Cooper Clarke, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Tom Waits, and a whole host of lesser exponents, the word 'poetry' is no longer synonymous with the stuffy texts which were forced down our throats at comprehensive school. J.C.C., in particular, has exploded the myth that 'serious' poetry must be anti-humour and recited in BBC English to be considered as such: tune in to 'Snap, Crackle and Bop' for concrete evidence.

The poetry of Aidan Cant, Bard of Forest Hall, follows the same path as those already mentioned: bold, abrasive, witty stanzas that take in topics as diverse as the lonliness of "Jonathan" to the humour of "Rolo's", a successful spoof of the TV ad for that particular product.

The Jam's Mr Weller has already made it clear that he thinks that Aidan deserves more exposure by publishing sixteen of his poems in a soon to be made available collection of verse called 'Mixed Up - Shook Up', which is issued by Riot Stories and is not to be missed.

So, should someone start reciting verse when you're next in the pub, it'll probably be Aidan giving one of his impromptu performances so give him a listen and/or buy him a pint and DONT be put off by the fact that what you're listening to is 'poetry

As Aidan says in "Through The Window": "Resist the scenes, and beware what lies ahead."

Get the message, hipsters?

Mal Armstrong

Press Darlins

And you thought it had all been done before. Press Darlins describe their music as taking "basic rhythms from American Indian and African Tribal music, fused with Punk rock". Interesting, huh? The band are a 5-piece, six if you count manager Brian Hartley, and their line-up is Mark - vocals (recently released from one of Her Majesty's remand centres for non-payment of fines); Knoxy- (he sleeps 36 hours a day); Horse - bass; Marty - rhythm guitar (I once got the same bus as him in Newcastle); and drummer Nick (the quiet one).

The band have "all hung around together since the advent of Punk rock", and individually they've been in several bands, "Each doing his own thing unsuccessfully" until they decided to form a band doing something they all wanted. They plan to release records before they start gigging, and their first release, 'Tribal Dance' c/w 'Chant No.12' is being produced by local entrepreneur and sometime Geordie Rapper, David Baird. Offstage, Brian describes the band as "Individuals, but on stage we shall be as one - 'We will end the divide'".

A bunch of Red Indian Punks from Newcastle? Some might have their reservations (groaaannnn...Ed.) about such an unlikely sounding combo, but the band are obviously committed to the idea. Also, at least one major London-based record company has expressed interest in the band.

For any further info, contact the Press Darlins by writing to them at 1310 Walker Road, Walker, Newcastle Upon Tyne, or you can phone drummer Nick at Wideopen 6344.

Allan Robinson

LYNX
STUDIOS

FORMERLY KNOWN AS SOUNDLINK

Field Close, Shieldfield, Newcastle upon Tyne
Tel: (0632) 23911

AT LAST . . . A PROFESSIONAL RECORDING STUDIO NEAR THE CENTRE OF NEWCASTLE . . .

Equipment includes:

16 channel — Allen & Heath desk, Brenell 1 inch 8-track tape machine wide range of MXR effects, Neumann + AKG mics, spacious studio + control room, wide range of amps, percussion + synths availabe free of charge, free parking, coffee and advice from our production team. Silly rates + superb sounds.

Genocide Exit

GENOCIDE EXIT - are a very promising NE band, comprising Lorna Bloggs, (vcls), Justin Bloggs, (gtr.), Ritchie Bloggs (gtr), Steve Bloggs, (drums) and the newly born Ian Bloggs, (bass). They are all brothers Their music attacks and batters, although it is occasionally subtle and as much as I like this group, I realise there is plenty of room for improvement. The band are often dismissed as Penetration clones, and, although there are similarities, to my mind, the band have more in common with Shakin' Street, or Destroy All Monsters, even a female fronted Dictators. They have finally arrived at a settled line-up after adding Ian Bloggs on bass, and are playing live, nearly everywhere at any opportunity they can get. They are the only Newcastle-based band who will not have to depend on an albeit very fine body to sell themselves, Lorna can SING! And the band are all excellent musicians, particularly the rhythm section, who are as tight as the Jam, and as interesting as The Fall or Swell Maps. The only soundwise criticism I can make is that there is too much strangulated guitar from Charlie Bloggs, who should definetly cut out the daft Robin Troweresque impersonations, otherwise, GREAT !

G.X's high quality should soon be proved on a 4-track EP, out soon on their own label, and here the band showed unparalelled intiative by donning moth-eaten cub uniforms and financing the the discs (As we in the biz refer to records) by doing gardening and going on sponsored walks, etc. Hopefully this will result in a successful debut recording and all the record companies will rush out to sign them.

If everything was fair, this group will one day be massive (For god's sake don't rush it, if it happens it happ-ens). front page of the NME. no.1 in the charts, page 3 of Sounds (Lorna only). They're fun, entertaining and v. commercial, go and see them- you won't be dissapointed. Remember, you read it first, and it was written by

Mark Bloggs (No relation)

Raven

Raven are basically set up around brothers John (bass) and Mark (guitar) Gallagher, and they've been rockin' and rollin' for quite some time. But only in the last ten months have things really started to pick up. Drummer Rob Hunter joined at the turn of the year, completing the line up, and with the current boom in Heavy Metal they're causing a great deal of interest.

Since signing for Neat records earlier this year, they've released their debut single, "Don't Want Your Money" c/w "Wiped Out", which will hardly storm the top 30, but has caused a great deal of local interest.

On stage, Raven are electrifying. They simply never stop rockin', and one of their songs says it all - "Rock Till Ya Drop"! A lot of songs they play are reminiscent of Montrose or Halen, but I feel it is in their vocal power where they suffer slightly. John handles the brunt of the vocals, with Mark coming in now and again with backing vocals. But I think that the majority of kids who go along to see Raven are too busy with the wild stage show to worry about that.

A few months ago they supported Whitesnake at Bradford and Sheffield and from all accounts it went very well. If you're into HM, then you'll love them.

Sam Blewitt

Strange Relations

Chris Mordey, Strange Relations' bassist, is feeling rather sick. I mean, I've just sat through a thoughtful entertaining set, one of the best I've witnessed by a local band in recent weeks, from his outfit, yet he says he didn't like it, couldn't enjoy it, because of the bunch of hired-hand, rent-a-crowd turkeys who occupied the front of the stage. These artless bunch of neck-ends pogoed, bashed into each other, and smashed glasses, generally making prize tits of themselves. Chris shouldn't worry - Strange relations are too good to be brought down by such terminal stupidity.

Apart from 21-year old Mordey, the band include 19-year old Martin Stephenson (lead guitar and back-up vocals), 17-year old Adam Lynam (drums and vocals), and lead vocalist and guitarist, Steve Zodiac. Chris and Steve were once members of the well-thought of Washington band, Murder The Disturbed, who had a 45 out on Small Wonder a couple of years ago or so.

Although together for only a short time, they've already developed a distinctive style a kind of breezy, modern pop, Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy, with Zodiac and Stephenson's guitar styles working well off each other. Outstanding numbers in their set include 'Subterranean Rhythm', 'The Sea', and a judiciously cover of The Velvet's 'Femme Fatale'.

I strongly urge you to catch this band live soon. Fans of The Teardrop Explodes -Bunnymen-Wah! Heat school of modern pop should find something of interes here.

Allan Robinson

White Heat

White Heat are a force to be reckoned with. Call them what you want, but there's no denying that they have that certain something that makes a band tick. General feeling locally is that White Heat should have netted a nice little record deal a long, long time ago, and I asked singer Bob Smeaton for his opinions on this.

"Well, maybe we should have, but you can't just rush into these things. We've been offered deals but've always felt that we could land a better one somewhere else. There are a lot of companies who are only too happy to sign, say, seven bands up at once, throw them all at a wall and hope that one will stick. That's exactly what we don't want." (Actually, the night I went along to see the band - at Balmbra's Music Hall - a few leading record companies were present, CBS and Virgin being amongst them.)

The present line-up is Bri Younger (guitar), Alan Fish (guitar), Carl Roberts (bass), George Waters (drums), and Bob on lead vocals.

Within the last year or so, White Heat have done well for themselves. Their one single release, 'Nervous Breakdown' on Valium records, made an encouraging - if brief - appearance in the alternative 45 chart and received a great deal of air play. The hope that an album may soon appear, and mentioned that Live Wire's Simon Bosswell may well produce it. Support spots for bands such as TRB, Judas Priest, The Pirates, The Jags and Mollyhatchet have also appeared.

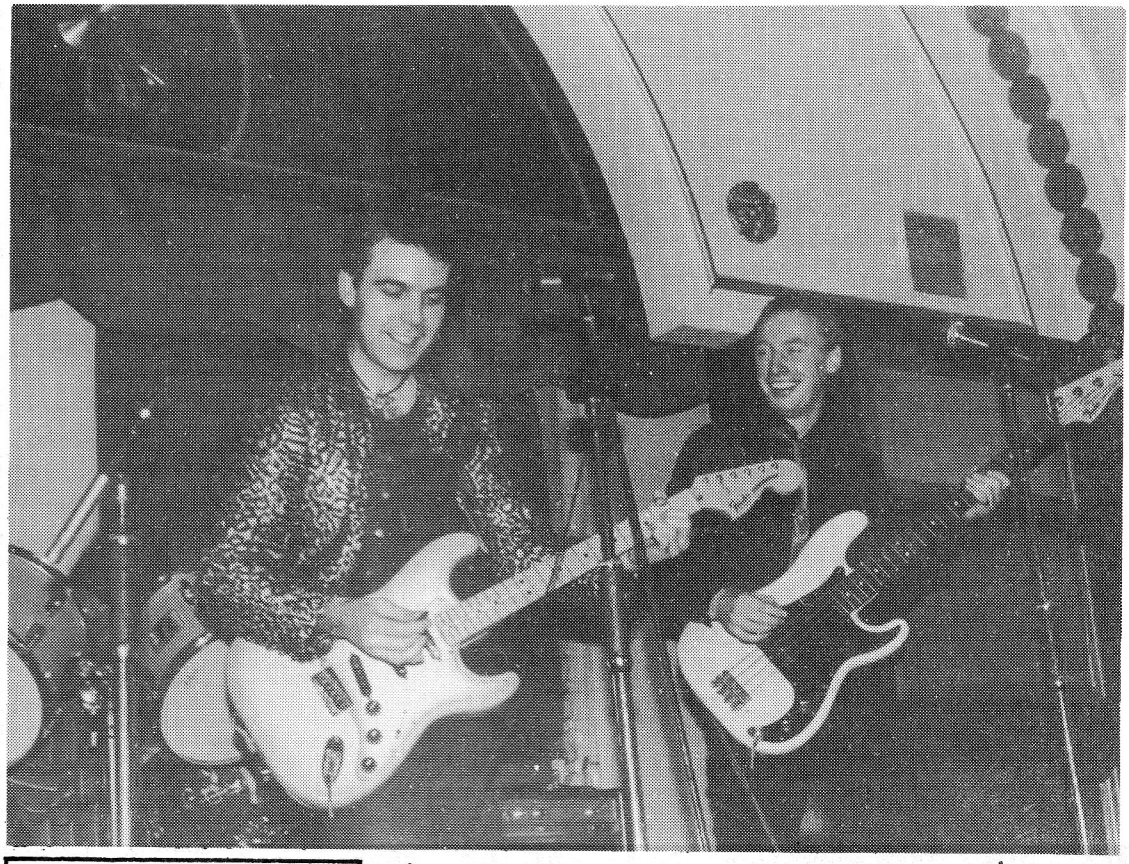
Smeaton demonstrates just how big White Heat are gonna be. The rest fall about laughing uncontrolably.

Reggae, rock, new-wave, old classics brought up to date - you name it, White Heat will play it! It would have been easy for them to jump onto one of the many passing bandwagons which have passed during the time that they've been together but they've resisted and went their own way.

They've got it, and they know they have!

Sam Blewitt

Sabrejets



Diesel and Kid Glover share a conga

On a non-eventful night, with nothing new to do, I went along to Balmbra's Music Hall on the off chance that something good might be happening. Something good WAS - it was the Sabrejets!

From the moment the stage exploded, it was obvious that this band were more than dumb entertainment, this was the BOSS sound, the sound rock'n'roll lost when Elvis joined up.

After the gig, I just had to speak to the Sabrejets, so scraping myself up from the floor and slithering backstage I managed to summon up the energy to request an interview, and started rapping with Diesel la Fume and Antoine Legrise...

Helter Skelter: How did the band get going?

Diesel: "We started off as The Hot Rod Gang originally, a completely purist rock'n' roll band, doing Ted clubs. I did a full year at the Rock'n'Roll Society, playing a weekly residency, but there was a tension growing in the band because I had started writing original stuff and the Teds wanted completely authentic 50's stuff and nothing else. So there was this sort of clash and we moved away from that. Really, 'Radioland' (their first Blueport 45) was one of our oldest songs, and even then it took a year to be released after it was recorded."

HS: The Ted scene seems to be changing a bit now.

Diesel: "Yeah. Now the Teds are listening to original stuff like Crazy Cavan. I still love the basic root music but obviously we're not a ted band now; we're going along in our own way."

HS: Have you played much in the rest of the country?

Diesel: "We've done the Acklam Hall in London's Rasta belt, and also the Notre Dame Hall. We've got the transport, we're just waiting for the gigs to come up."

HS: Do you find it easier to get gigs now that you've got a couple of singles out?

Diesel: "We've got a fortunate advantage in that what we do goes down well in the working men's clubs without the set being altered in any way at all. We use the same volume, same instruments, same stagewear. What you get in the clubs, of course, is people who remember rock'n'roll from their youth, and they get up and dance to it. Although when we do 'Voodoo Cave' (their 2nd Blueport single - highly recommended - Ed.) which they've never heard before, they start doing conga lines around the floor and all sorts of things!"

HS: Aren't you worried about R&B being 'old men's' music?

Diesel: "I couldn't give a damn. I'm not a trendy teenager and I don't care who listens to us. We're not really an R&B band either; we're more interested in doing our own stuff."

HS: If the new single takes off, would you still stay on Blueport?

Diesel: "Oh yeah, definitely. I wouldn't like a major deal because what happens is they give you a sum of money - which makes you look like you're suddenly rich - you spend it all and then they take it all back off you in royalties. So you've got no money and they've got you in their pocket.

"I like the Blueport philosophy, and Idd much rather be a success on Blueport than on EMI."

Just for the record, the current Sabrejets line up is:- Diesel Lafume (guitar, vocals), Kid Glover (bass), Steve Smedley (guitar), Antoine Legrise (Sax, congas) and Rico Reed (drums).

Mark Inmonger

Biting Insects

Main purveyors of rock'n' sensibility at Newcastle's Golden Fleece most Wednesday nights, the Biting Insects represent the badly hair-dressed fringe of today's wave of 'funny rock'.

Having been formed at the said Golden Fleece, it would appear that they've taken their monicker from the personal hygene problems of some of its patrons. Their line-up is: Paul Sneddon - verbals, harmonica, sax, old raincoat; Rod Davies - guitar, dark glasses; Marion Bell - vocals, more interesting than the other two.

The Biting Insects have been irritating audiences for four months now, and Paul sees them as not just another name embroidered on the back of a denim jacket, but more as the Support Group Supreme..

Puzzled? Quoth Paul: "The music we play can't be repeated over and over again like your average Abba record. Amusing things rely heavily on originality, and on a first listen you say, "that's funny", but you wouldn't want to make a return trip just to hear the same jokes, now would you?"

Live, a true folk-finger-in-the-ear song entitled 'Hovercraft' - a tale of one man's digestive problems on a rough ride to France - is not to be missed. Another highlight is the sensitively titled 'Let's Sniff Our Bums'. You guessed it - this is Art!

Paul wanted to win over the readers of this fabled mag, and whilst standing on a chair in the middle of the pub, H.S. tape machine in hand, shouted "Hi there, readers! Like, we really wanna get to know you people out there in... What's the name of this mag again?.. In Helter Skelter land!" What a nutter!

Well, folks, you've read the guff, now see the group.

T.H. Bogart

Dancing Lessons

Dancing Lessons were featured in our last great bumper issue, when they played their very first gig at the, now defunct, Kings Head. The band consist of Keith Proud (vocals), John Furness (bass), Steve Atkinson (keyboards), Joe Judd (guitar) and Mick Oliver (drums). The band's history so far has been a few gigs with the Willus Bnad, a spell working with Anti-Pop, but have also been involved promoting their own gigs, using the likes of Spectro Art Centre as a venue, where they reckon a capacity crowd attended. Gigs are running low at the minute, but a return visit to Gateshead's Belle Vue is planned for the near future.

Material wise, Dancing Lessons have had a re-think. They intend dropping all cover versions from their set and concentrate on writing more original material.

Any contact with Dancing Lessons should be made through Keith Proud on Newcastle 742607.

Colin Green

Rival Savages

At a time when all the best Modern Music seems to be being made in other parts of the British Isles, it's always good to see an intelligent, articulate band from more or less your own backyard making thoughtful, contemporary rock'n'roll. Rival Savages are a four-piece Gateshead band who actually use the old guitar-bass-drums-vocals line-up to great effect (hands up how many people have noticed that the best music of today is produced by bands using essentially 'traditional' line-ups?), their sound is full of space and atmosphere without sounding colourless or too sparse.

The band are Paul Horsely (22), on bass; 23 year-old drummer Bob Clark; vocalist Paul McTaggart (22), and guitarist Alan Brown (23). They've been together since June this year, and have already recorded a 5-track demo at Guardian studios featuring 'Garden Of The Damned', 'Get Some!', 'Year Of The Child', 'Hiroshima', and 'Communication Breakdown'. A single of the first two songs - sparkling deceptively lightweight pop tunes, with vivid, acerbic lyrics - should be out in two to three months, so watch out for it.

For further info., write to the band at 120 Rectory Rd, Bensham, Gateshead, NE8 1xL, Tyne and Wear.

Allan Robinson

Fist

If you're a HM fan and you ain't heard of Fist, then you're on the wrong tracks. They're probably the most experienced and capable of the North East HM bands. Formerly called Axe, Fist's line-up is Keith Satchfield (guitar/vocals), Dave Irwin (guitar), Harry 'Hiroshima' Hill (drums) and John Whylie (bass).

Their first single, released earlier this year on Neat records, was "Name, Rank, And Serial Number" c/w "You'll Never Get Me Up (In One Of Those)" has helped them to clinch a deal with MCA, and they are now working on an album which should be out soon. They've also toured with Samson, proving themselves more than worhhy of their support spot.

I think that the album will do well, and the band are certainly worth a visit. So save your pennies, kids, and give some support to one of the finest bands to step out of this region.

Sam Blewitt

FYND

BUY & SELL RECORDS & CASSETTES

FYND

SELL T-SHIRTS, INCENSE, AND
A WIDE RANGE OF GREAT CLOTHES
-------- ALL AT, -------

FYND

12-21 Handyside Arcade,
off Percy Street,
Newcastle-upon-tyne. TEL. 27073.

The Toy Dolls

In case you didn't already know it, this bunch of adolescents are from Sunderland, Grangetown and Thorney Close to be exact, and their names and functions are as follows: Olga sings and plays guitar, Flip plays bass, and Dean plays drums.

The 'Sounds'' Gary Bushell, among others has befriended these young sprogs and placed them in some pathetique punk crusade along with the likes of Splodgnessabounds, who Gary says the Toy Dolls resemble. Personally, I think he hasn't got a clue what's going on with these honest, naive Northern lads: his recent article on them was about as incisive as one of The Sun's editorials.

One of Helter Skelter's completely trustworthy contributors (me) spoke with Olga of the Toy Dolls to find out the truth behind the lies and fabrication.

The Toy Dolls formed in December 1979, 6 months after Olga had left The Showbiz Kids because he felt that they weren't really doing anything. He had all but hung up his guitar leads to become a postman... Yes, a postman! What changed your mind, Olga?

"I dunno. I had a few songs that I'd written about my girlfriend, 'cos I write all my songs about my girlfriend, and I showed them to my mother and sister and they thought they were great..."

Their first break was the single, "Tommy Kowey's Car" c/w "She Goes To Fino's" their second being a worthy appearance on Tyne Tees' 'Check It OOt' programme. From these exploits, Magnet records have awakened from slumber and seem on the verge of taking the T.D.'s away from their Grangetown streets, and offering them a recording contract and everything (save REAL financial support) that goes with it.

Olga has all sorts of local Sunderland characters dotted around his songs, such as Benny the Boxer, Fino's club, and references to motor shops in which his girlfriend works. He never buys singles, but does have hordes of original Surf records (Safaris, Chanthays, etc.,) and the T.D.'s perform quite a stirring 'Wipe Out' themselves. Olga's fave groups at the minute are the Cockney Neck-ends and Sham, and he gets his sunglasses at the Nearly New shop in Grangetown.

Olga says, quite emphatically, that he'll give The Toy Dolls 3 years to cut it, and with that sort of attitude, plus the obvious talent of himself, Dean and Flip, I can't see much stopping them.

T.H. Bogart

Treatment Room

Treatment room are one of the bands who are boldly trying to go where no band has gone before (in Newcastle, anyway!) Their music is dark, gloomy and some of the most danceable stuff ever to make a floor rumble, like a musical spring that has been stretched to its limit, or a good horror movie, they keep you tense, apprehensive and entertained.

The band line-up is Steve Oliver (bass), Brian Wood (drums) and Chris Simpson (guitar/vocals), and they've been together since February 1979.

Gigs and finance have been the main problems for this ambitious band who've so far had feelers out in London, Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester in an effort to gain more recognition. They're desperately keen to put out a 45, but feel that even if they could afford to, the effort would probably go unrecognised in Newcastle.

"I think that Newcastle is one of the worst cities in England for new things. Most people in Newcastle just get off at the bus-stop and go straight to a disco, they couldn't give a shit about bands, they're just not interested. They'd rather go to the social clubs and spend their money on pigeons or football."

If people refuse to get into Treatment Room, then they deserve all the third-rate contrived crap that record companies throw at them. Treatment Room ARE!

Mark Inmonger

Seven Minutes

Bogart told me that when he met Seven Minutes at Lynx Studios the other day, they were somewhat perturbed that I was talking to someone else whilst they were onstage at Spectro Arts recently. Sorry, chaps, but these things will happen. And anyway, stop taking all this pop-biz so seriously!

What I did see of the band greatly impressed me: a sci-fi package with an overwhelming pop sensibility.

Bill Nelson, he of Be Bop Deluxe and Red Noise fame, is apparently a guiding light to this Newcastle-based band of Alan Stevenson (lead guitar/vocals), Kenneth Oxley (rhythm guitar/vocals), Bryn Karmzyn (bass) and Keith Waite (drums), and, certainly, his influence shows in much of

Rhythmic Noise

Rhythmic Noise is a positive force, a forward thinking co-operative of five Newcastle-based bands, instigated by The Scared Bananas, who wanted to provide a much needed united front between Newcastle groups with similar ideas. Rhythmic Noise consists of The Scared Bananas, Pavane, Drabwise Mix, Bomb Culture, and Soviet Bloc, the common link being the lack of flesh and blood drummers, the belief being that the use of rhythm machines avoids the cliched sounds which a lot of bands think of as music! They also believe that no other bands have explored the full potential of drummerless drumbeats, and also, you don't have to keep on buying drum machines drinks!

In the Rhythmic Noise world, originality is the order of the day. Entertaining? Yes! But at a Rhythmic Noise concert you won't be handed anything on a plate; you must be prepared to listen and enquire. They are instigators rather than imitators, although they do occupy the waste-land between Wire and PiL, and they are definitely not in this business for money - they want girls!

An example of this unmaterialistic attitude is their decision to put on gigs with five (count 'em) FIVE bands, for only one crisp (or even crumpled) pound note. Each band plays a 25 minute set so that the audience will not get bored, as usually happens with a'proper' band; all self-indulgence has been eradicated.

All the groups realise the need for a receptive audience, and rather than wait for the audience to come to them, like other 'groups' would, Rhythmic Noise are pulling up the pegs and taking the whole shebang to the previously neglected suburbs and villages, taking manna to Hebburn, Ryton, Consett, Wallsend, Benwell...

All money made by the corporation will go towards a five track single, or possibly a four-track tape recorder. It is also hoped to bring a 'name' band to the city in a musical exchange deal...altogether now, WHAT A GOOD IDEA!

I've done my bit, so come on, Mr Ravendale, where did you put that tape recorder?

Mark Inmonger

their original material. Their main strength onstage is the virgin enthusiasm of vocalists Stevenson and Oxley, who perform with an exuberance verging on the manic. Unfortunately, the rhythm section often fails to complement this dynamism, and is to be heard plodding instea of punching, creating a spongey backdrop to what is otherwise a tenacious sound.

Nevertheless, Seven Minutes have plenty of time to iron out their creases, and their soon to be released single featuring (Ithink) 'Animals Of The Metropolis' and 'The Joys Of Photography' - easily their best two numbers - deserves to do well.

Just stay with it, men, stay with it.

Mal Armstrong

The Enigma

The Enigma are a 4-piece South Tyneside rock band, featuring 17-year-old chanteuse Karen Atkinson, and 18-year-olds Jimmy Dolan (drums), Paul Chambers (guitar) and Adrian Bell (bass). The band have been together about a year, forming whilst they were all at school (Let's hear it for St, Joe's, Hebburn!). I saw them in action recently and, although their set featured heavily a set of covers of chart hits like 'Brass In Pocket' and 'Me, Myself, I', they did at least perform them with a certain youthful verve, and Paul Chambers' neat use of guitar effects was a real highlight.

Of the three self-penned songs the band played, 'Screaming For You' was a standout, a real uncut gem, Karen Atkinson being allowed to cut loose and use her not inconsiderable vocal range to the full, whilst the Bell-Dolan rhythm section provided a neat back-up.

A few more self-penned numbers like this should see the band move away from its more obvious influences, and if one of the other members could sing backing vocals and the band as a whole develop a more attacking style (God, this is beginning to sound like Bob Wilson reviewing Blackburn Rovers), Then the Enigma could well develop into one of the areas most promising bands.

Just keep at it you guys (and gal), that's all, and if you can come up with a few more chewns like 'Screaming Out...', then you won't have many worries.

Allan Robinson

Prefab Sprout

A cassette containing two studio tracks and half a dozen live numbers, delivered by courtesy of the good old Royal Mail, was enough to send myself, Bogart and Allan Robinson scurrying off to Durham to check out a three-piece outfit operating under the curious name of Prefab Sprout. Now this in itself may not seem odd, but what usually happens around here is that demo cassettes are passed from person to person with recommendations like 'This band are great, but I think someone else should cover them 'cos they're not really my scene, man', until some unfortunate hack realises that he hasn't got enough copy in for the issue and has to make the necessary effort.

But not this time. If this band were even half as good as their cassette suggested, then here at last was something resembling the Genuine Article. And let there be no doubt about it, Prefab Sprout are the Genuine Article.

Consisting of the two McAloon brothers, Paddy (guitar/vocals) and Martin (bass), plus Mick Salmon on drums, the Sprouts create a sound which puts even the best of the rest in the shade.

Their main strength lies in the extraordinary songwriting capabilities of Paddy McAloon, a disarmingly pleasant chap whose nervous energy count seems to constantly register 'overload'. Songs such as the unusual 'Radio Love', the humorous 'Technique', and the completely enthralling 'Cherry Tree', demonstrate that this is no ordinary talent at work: McAloon's vision is both bizarre and unique. He's no slouch on guitar, either, and the rhythm section appears to be in total sympathy with his subject matter.

Residing, as they do, in the Durham village of Witton Gilbert, gigs aren't the easiest things in the world to come by, but they're currently making twice-a-month appearances at The Brewers Arms, Gilesgate, and gigs in Newcastle are being arranged for the near future. Miss them if you dare.

There are so many things to say about this band that rather than piffle on in this short space, a feature on the Sprouts must surface in issue no.4.

Honestly, they're THAT good.

Mal Armstrong

The Big Drum Shop Owned And Run By Professional Drummers
To Provide A Service Unequalled In The North

Lonnies DRUM SHOP

MAIN DEALER for Gretsch / Slingerland / Premier

PLUS Spares & Repairs / Tuition / Hire / Postal Service / Coffee / Pool Table

Vast Range of Zildjians!

158 NEW BRIDGE STREET NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

Tel : (0632) 24530 - 22331

Erogenous Zones

The Erogenous Zones exist at the moment on recording tape supplied by Guardian Studios in Durham, in the minds of interested record company personnel, and with the group themselves.

They haven't bothered with the usual course taken by most provincial groups, a line which involves formation, gigs, public interest, and finally recording themselves for posterity. The Erogenous Zones' only public action was on the Check It Oot band special, in which they appeared on video tape as a finished group, but performed to a pre-recorded tape on which all instruments excluding drums and vocals were supplied by their guitar/keyboard and songwriting inspiration, Trevor Sewell.

Even if you don't know them from another Nolan Sisters' record, they nevertheless have shaken a number of major record companies into wanting to give them loads of loot, pictures in the papers, and even an "out-of-her-depth" interview with Check It Oot's Lynn Spencer.

I would suggest that some of this initial success is due to the inclusion of a rather sultry chanteuse, one Sue Porter, because Trevor intimated that he had sent only a letter and a photo of Sue (no tape) to some of the record companies who are presently breathing heavily on their bedroom windows. Try a sex change, all budding Bob Dylans!

The other two members of The Zones are John McKenna on drums and Chick Ryder (betcha Kiss are kicking themselves 'cos they didn't think of that name first) on bass.

On listening to their recorded tape, they sound a bit like Buggles (no offence intended), and a few of the girl-fronted pop groups currently mincing their ways to and from stardom. These assumptions, however, detract from the fact that The Erogenous Zones possess some very strong material (unlike the lick'n'bop stuff they minced on TV) which does have some original qualities.

They seem to be old heads at the game, and Sue Porter's dad used to be a black and white minstrel, and probably knows the biz better than any of us. They're currently finding venues, and all power to them.

T.H. Bogart

Disorder

A Sunderland punk band, who've been together about a year, Disorder released their first single, 'Air Raid' c/w 'Law And Disorder', on the Kent-based Ace label. Already the band've sold out the original quantity of records pressed, and the 45 was to have been on their own label, but Ace liked it so much that they released it.

Their next single, coupling 'Reality Crisis' ("A song about kids being addicted to fashion", says vocalist Mark Rough) with '1984' ("Title's self-explanatory" - Mark Rough again), available from all good record shops, on the (ta..daaa) Durham Book Centre Label!

Unfortunately, I didn't get to see the band in action as the gig was curtailed by the Gosforth Hotel's management due to the rather, ahem, 'over-zealous', shall we say, behaviour of support band Warsaw's followers, but reports from trusted sources assured yours truly that the band are pretty good, and dancing Jack Peel, Radio 1 DJ of reknown, is said to be partial to their debut single.

The band are: Jim McCullough lead guitar and all of sweet 15; Vocalist Mark Rough, an an ancient 16 years of age; Bassist Paul Coates (15); and drummer Malcolm Comb ("As in hair-brush", M. Rough yet again), 16. Any further info. can be obtained from the band's lovely manageress, Ann, at The Durham Book Centre on Sunderland 74389.

Allan Robinson

Flesh

Some of you may well have seen Flesh in action supporting The Clash at the Mayfair back in June, when the duo of George Handleigh (guitar) and Andrew McKenzie (synth, flute, reeds, vocals) weathered a hail of Northumbrian hockle (Oh! really, boys - you do behave exactly as people expect you to at rock gigs, don't you?) to deliver a highly stimulating set, that missed as often as it hit, but was still a good 80% more challenging than the slick, well-oiled Americanised tour machine that The Allman Bro... sorry, The Clash came up with.

Their acidic, astringent version of 'My Boy Lollipop', released earlier this year as the band's debut single, appears on their own label, Dancing Industries, a venture spawned by Andrew and George which is not solely limited to the making of records - they want to develop the Dancing Industries logo to cover the visual arts as well, seeing that the 80's is likely to become the 'Video Age' (Copyright James Burke). Andrew outlined his reasons thus for Dancing Industries' formation:

"The general feeling around Britain is that they (the bands) are just going to sit around until a major record company offers them a million pound contract. You can't do that - you give YOURSELF a contract, you put it out on your own label, then, if you really want to sign to a major company, which is suicide as far as we are concerned, go and do it."

Flesh aren't really operating in the same sort of field as any other local outfit, and as such, you can't really judge them by local outfits' standards. No two gigs are the same because the band (is that the right word?) use pre-recorded backing tapes to which George and Andrew improvise over the top. As I said before, it's not yet a 100% effective set, but there's an element of brooding unease and a sense of challenge which pervades the set, like an H.P. Lovecraft novel.

So, you ask, why do 'My Boy Lollipop'? A threadbare piece of purest pap for then people?:

"What you have to remember is that it was recorded about 7 months ago, and it's taken so long to get the record out, that it's totally non-representative of what we're like. We did 'My Boy Lollipop' because it was such a sweet, cloying, horrible tune - and originally, the re-written subject matter was about plagiarism - and if you think about it, we're using someone else's tune and we're changing it - so it was quite relevant at the time."

All I can advise is that you go see the band sometime, but be carefull - you've really got to chuck all your preconceptions of what a rock group is and what it should be clean out of the window. If you don't wanna clap, then don't: Flesh won't mind. But for Chrissakes, take the blinkers off your eyes and ears. Just once.

Allan Robinson

Lynx Studios

Hold fast to your socks, equipment fanciers, a Lynx review with no real concern for their fabulous gear. (Read their ad. in this mag if you wanna know!)
Lynx studios is a compact little studio situated very near to Newcastle's city centre (Shieldfield actually, down New Bridge St and turn left at St Dominic's priory). It's an 8-track studio, which implies that the people at Lynx are thinking more realistically towards its patrons' financial position than some of their competitors. Lynx costs a lot less than a 16 or 24-track studio and most of you starving and struggling naive young groups out there should think about this simpler approach to your first recordings and tentative independent singles outings.

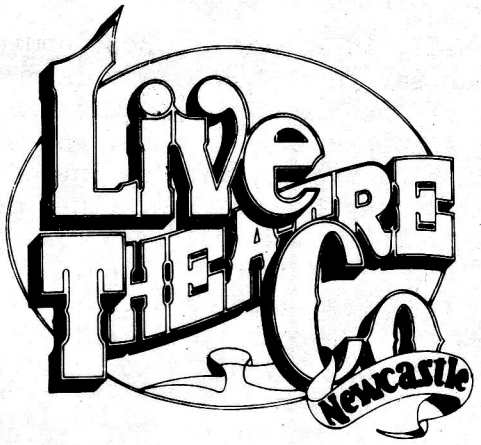
As local outfit Seven Minutes were in the studio recording at the same time that I was wandering about, I asked them what their impressions were. They reckoned that they were having one or two problems getting in the mood in an environment that is very different from their usual live work situation, but intimated that Lynx supremo, Jon Craig was sympathetic to their layman's description of the sort of sound they were after, which is a good sign and says mucho about the Lynx set-up.

There's plenty of gear there to be used free of charge, and rates are around £1o.50 per hr., or £75 for a 10hr session.

Shame about the bloody awful tea, though!

T.H. Bogart

LIVE THEATRE CO.



8 TRINITY CHARE
QUAYSIDE
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 3DF
Tel: 0632 612694

'LEAVE ' by John Bond

A new farce about two Newcastle soldiers home on leave from Northern Ireland.

Wednesday 15 October to Saturday 18 October	7.30	Gulbenkian Studio, King's Walk, Haymarket, Newcastle.
Thursday 23 October	8.00	John Boste Youth Centre, Philipson Street, Walker.

'THE SAINTS COME MARCHING IN' by C.P. Taylor

'Wonderfully funny' (Evening Chronicle)

'A real sparkler' (The Guardian)

Monday 3 November	7.30	Sam Smith's Pavilion, behind Benfield School, Benfield Road, Newcastle 6.
Thursday 6 November	7.30	Bede Hall, Sunderland Poly, Burdon Road.
Wednesday 12 November	7.30	Whitley Bay Playhouse, Marine Avenue.
Thursday 13 November	7.30	New College, Neville's Cross, Durham.
Friday 14 November	8.00	Biddick Farm Arts Centre, Washington.

HELTER SKELTERING

ATTENTION!! ATTENTION!! This announcement is not to be disregarded!

We here at Helter Skelter have decided, in our infinite wisdom, to put together a sampler cassette of local bands. If you think that you might benefit from a track or two on this cassette, then this is what you must do, chums:

(1) Contact the mag BY POST ONLY! (If everybody telephones I'll be too busy answering the bloody thing to get anything else done.)

(2) DO NOT SEND A TAPE AS YET. This is because we're not absolutely certain how we're going to run things, and also, we haven't got a clue how many bands will be interested in our spiffing idea.

Hopefully, this is what will happen: once enough interest is shown - and one thing we ARE sure of is that the whole project is to be run on a first come/first served basis - we'll need a reel-to-reel copy of no more than TWO of your miesterwerks (songs, dummy). From there, we'll compile a master tape from which the finished cassettes will be extracted. We will pay for all cassettes, packaging, etc, and will also make sure that all reputable record companies receive a copy. As we aren't doing this to make a profit (strange but true) absolutely no bread-heads need apply.

The finished product will have about 20 tracks on it (possibly more), and if enough interest is shown, will probably sell for about £1·70, depending on the quality of the cassettes used.

All YOU have to do is let us know you're interested so that we can get started. So do it NOW!

Letters have been arriving thick and fast (mostly thick) since the last issue (March 1965, remember?), so keep it up 'cos next issue we're gonna have a proper letter page. But for the time being, You'll have to make do with a couple of snippets from the Helter Skelter mailbag.

Firstly, there's the letter from Roz and his/her buddies complaining about Al Robinson's verbal attack on Toyah some months ago. Roz and co., claim that Al must be either blind and deaf, or else wasn't even at the gig in question. "You proved you're as thick as Gary Bushell and Nick Kent" and "You were obviously pissed out of your tiny little mind", were the comments which sprang forth from the letter.

Well, in answer to those comments, all I can say is that Allan Robinson certainly WAS at the gig, and was quite chuffed at being compared to Mr Kent, who many, including myself, rate as one of the U.K.'s more perceptive writers. (The Gary Bushell bit he found a degree less flattering.) Neither is he deaf or blind, although he has been seen downing a fair few pints of brew from time to time. Basically, he just thought that Toyah's Newcastle performance was sub-standard and thought it his duty as a writer to say so. Nuff said!

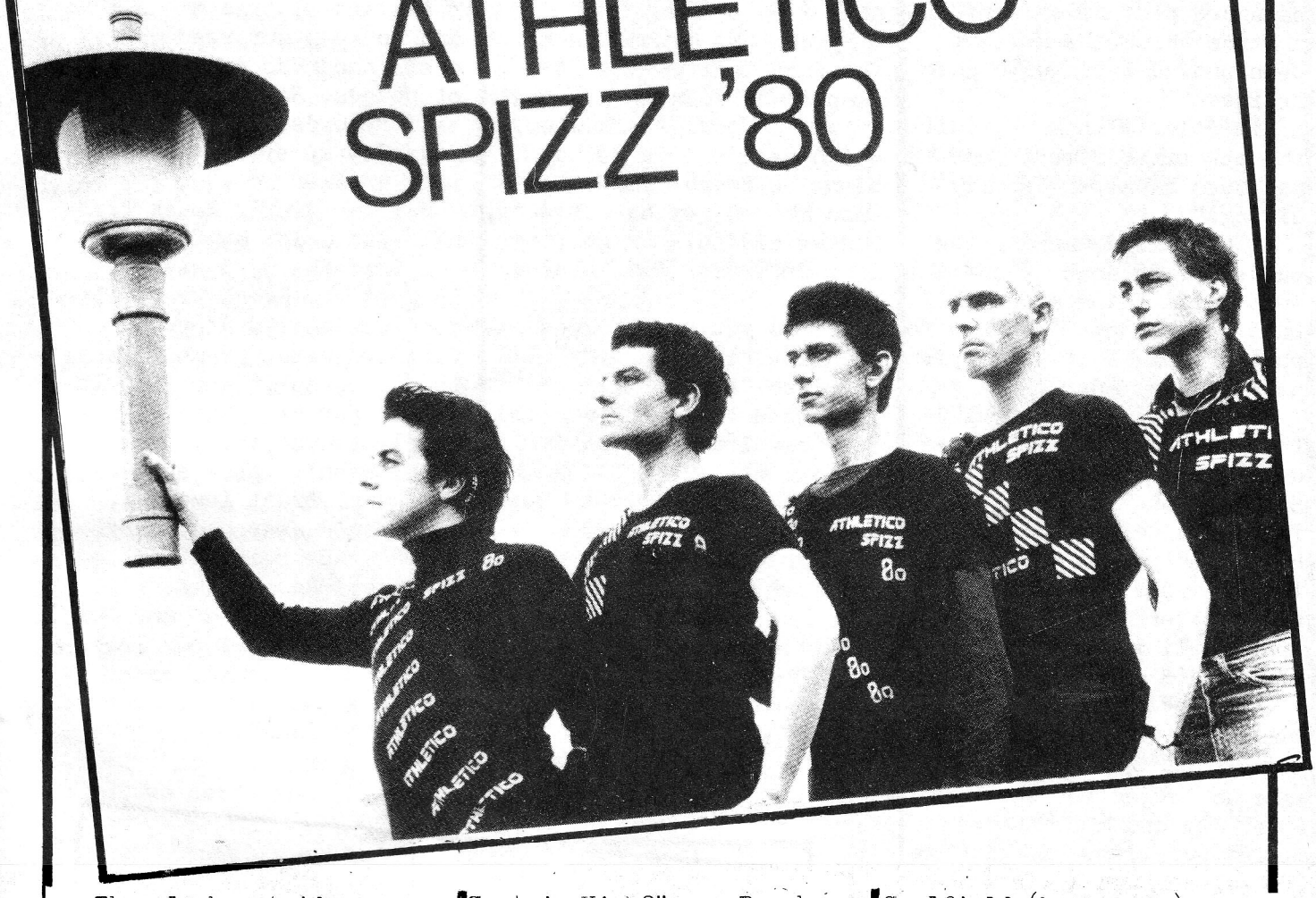
Stevie B. wrote a very comprehersive letter, saying - amongst a whole host of other things - that he thought the 'Looking Back' articles weren't really valid, and that we should discontinue them. This set off a debate amongst our writers, the outcome being that there is no longer a feature of this kind in the mag. Thanks a lot for the letter, Stevie, and keep them coming.

That's it for this issue, except for me to apologise to everyone who's been waiting for the issue to arrive in the shops. Sorry, but the delay was unavoidable owing to - amongst less serious things our chronic shortage of cash. Hopefully, the next issue will emerge at the start of December. Oh yeah, and thanks to all the shops etc., who helped us out by placing an ad. in this issue.

See you soon (ho! ho!)

Mak Armstrong

ATHLETICO SPIZZ '80



The clock outside Marlborough bus station was chiming 5.00pm as I made my way to Newcastle's Centre Hotel; the word on the street was that Athletico Spizz 80 were in town, and harsh - but fair - Mal Armstrong had told me to get an interview with the band or buy myself a waterproof typewriter. To be honest, I didn't need much persuasion as my battle hardened heart has always had a soft spot for Spizz ever since I saw him in Spizz Oil supporting The Banshees, soldiering on even though 90% of the audience were booing him and his fellow Oilman, Pete Petrol.

That was two years ago and things have changed. Spizz formed Spizz Energi, ascending to almost dizzy heights of deserved popularity after releasing two excellent singles, "Soldier, Soldier" and "Where's Captain Kirk?", on Rough Trade, before joining the big league by signing the newly-named Athletico Spizz 80 to A&M. With the first album, "Do A Runner", selling faster than muskets in Afghanistan, the future looked bright, the writing was on the wall and it spelled out SUCCESS!

I arrived at the Centre Hotel to find loads of kids - average age about 14 - hanging around Spizz like flies around a big, juicy cowpat, all after his autograph on their well-worn records. 'Rollermania', I thought. Later, I realised how close to the truth that thought had been.

I collared Spizz for an interview after the sound-check and we headedfor the hotel restaurant. All the band - Jim Solar (bass), C.P. Snare (drums), Dave Scott (guitar), Mark Coalfield (keyboards), plus Spizz (vocals) - were present as I pressed the start button of my cassette player.

Helter Skelter: Reviews have said your charm would only last so long. How do you feel about that?

Spizz: "They said that a long time ago. It was NME's Adrian Thrills saying that I wouldn't be very successful on an album, and that I should stick to singles. But that was many moons ago and we've totally moved on as a band and, therefore, can get across on an album."

HS: Were you surprised by the good critical reception the album received?

Spizz: "Well, it was a 50-50 reception actually!"

C.P.Snare: "Yeah, it's been varied."

HS: (Desperately) But it's been a lot better than most bands get...

Spizz (as if speaking to a moron): "You must have only been reading one or two papers 'cos we've obviously (yeah, OBVIOUSLY -Ed.) read all the reviews and have a balanced picture of what the critics think. We have'nt been snowed under with good reviews."

Jim Solar: "In fact, quite the opposite. Some of the bad ones have been really biting."

HS (quickly changing the subject): To some extent the most solid thing about the band is the name 'Spizz'. To what extent is it just Spizz plus backing musicians?

Jim Solar: "None at all. The roles are sort of pre-determined by the fact that Spizz is the lead singer. If it was called 'Jim Solar 80', then people would begin to ask questions."(And that would never do.)

HS: Well why do you change the band's name every year?

Spizz: "Well we had to because Spizz '77 split up and so did Spizz Oil, so we were no longer the same band. I met Jim and Mark and we called ourselves energi. The line-up changed again when Dave Scott joined in Sept '79 and then C.P. at the end of the year, so it was a case of new band, new decade, new name: no better reason than that for changing the name! But to keep people informed we have to keep 'Spizz' in it.

"By changing our name we can have many open ends musically; we don't restrict ourselves like some bands, who give themselves a 'scene' we're a bit more adaptable than that."

HS: But surely you have a scene going with the T-shirts and Star Trek. Y'know, an image?

Spizz: "Not many people make a note of that. Only about 2% of our reviews have mentioned that we've been wearing fairly O.K. deigned T-shirts."

HS: Do you design them yourselves?

C.P.: "Spizz designs them."

Spizz: "I just try to make them as eye-catching as possible."

HS: Why did you leave Rough Trade and sign up with A&M?

Spizz: "We moved due to the fact that we are five people who consume a certain amount of money each week, which we couldn't get by being on Rough Trade. We also had to get out of debt, and we did this by getting into debt with A&M." (Eh? - Ed.)

HS: Do you have a good relationship with A&M?

Spizz: "We've easily surpassed their expectations for the album, so they're pleased about that. The reason we signed with them was to get our records straight into the shops at the right time and to gain the necessary amount of promotion. This HAS been done."

HS: I've read a few letters criticising your recent move to London...

Spizz: "Well I'VE had a few letters saying it's a good move, and also congratulations on moving to A&M!"

Jim Solar: "To pay all our rents and elctric bills, and to keep our road crew, costs hundreds and hundreds of pounds. So you HAVE to sell records just to pay your debts, either that or find another job."

HS: But didn't Rough Trade help you a lot at first?

Spizz: "We were never 'signed' by Rough Trade. The deal was that we'd produce a finished piece of music and they'd press it and distribute it for us. So it was simple to use them."

HS: Wasn't there some kind of mutual trust involved, that you'd keep producing Rough Trade records?

Spizz: "Rough Trade's position is that anyone who wants to leave simply leaves. We weren't poached, like SLF were, we left because we wanted to CHART!"

Athletico Spizz 80

HS: Do you find it easy to write songs?

Spizz: "I have a certain enthusiasm for some subjects but... The next album will have more band compositions on it anyway."

Jim Solar: (to me) "Don't you like the lyrics then?"

HS:Well, they are a bit... simple..

Spizz: "I wouldn't call 'Rhythm Inside' simple!"

C.P.: "It's articulate!"

HS: But what about 'Clocks Are Big"?

Spizz: "Yeah, but that's an exception. I did try to write extra words for 'Airships', but I thought they might clutter it up. There is a case for holding back, y'know!"

At this point Spizz Spizzed off to his hotel room, leaving me to talk with his band, who were friendly and unpretentious and said a lot of sensible things. Unfortunately, I'd turned the cassette off by this time, thinking that the interview was over. (Yes, it's true - even fans can be sloppy jounalists!) I only wished that Spizz had argued as well as his group did, or at least considered what he said as much as they did. As it was, it appeared that his whacko/funola image is a charade, it seems he's just after lots of money and fame, a big headed bread-head.

Recently I've read other interviews with him and the answers he gave were almost WORD FOR WORD the same as the answers he gave me!

Despondently (I was a fan remember) I left the Centre Hotel, packed away my 'Barricuda' stickered cassette recorder and did a runner!

Mark Inmonger

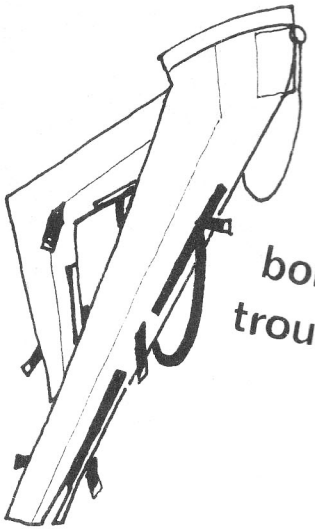
GUITARCRAFT
185 Westgate Road,
(within Armstrong Racing Developments)
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.
Telephone 614037

GUITARCRAFT

—For all Guitar and Amplifier repairs
—Custom Guitar Building to your specifications
— All Services at the most competitive rates

TITS for Badges and Clothes

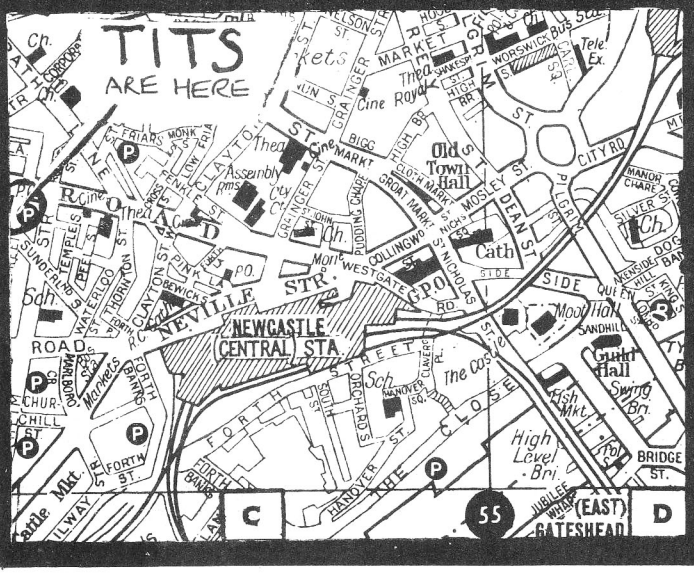
leathers



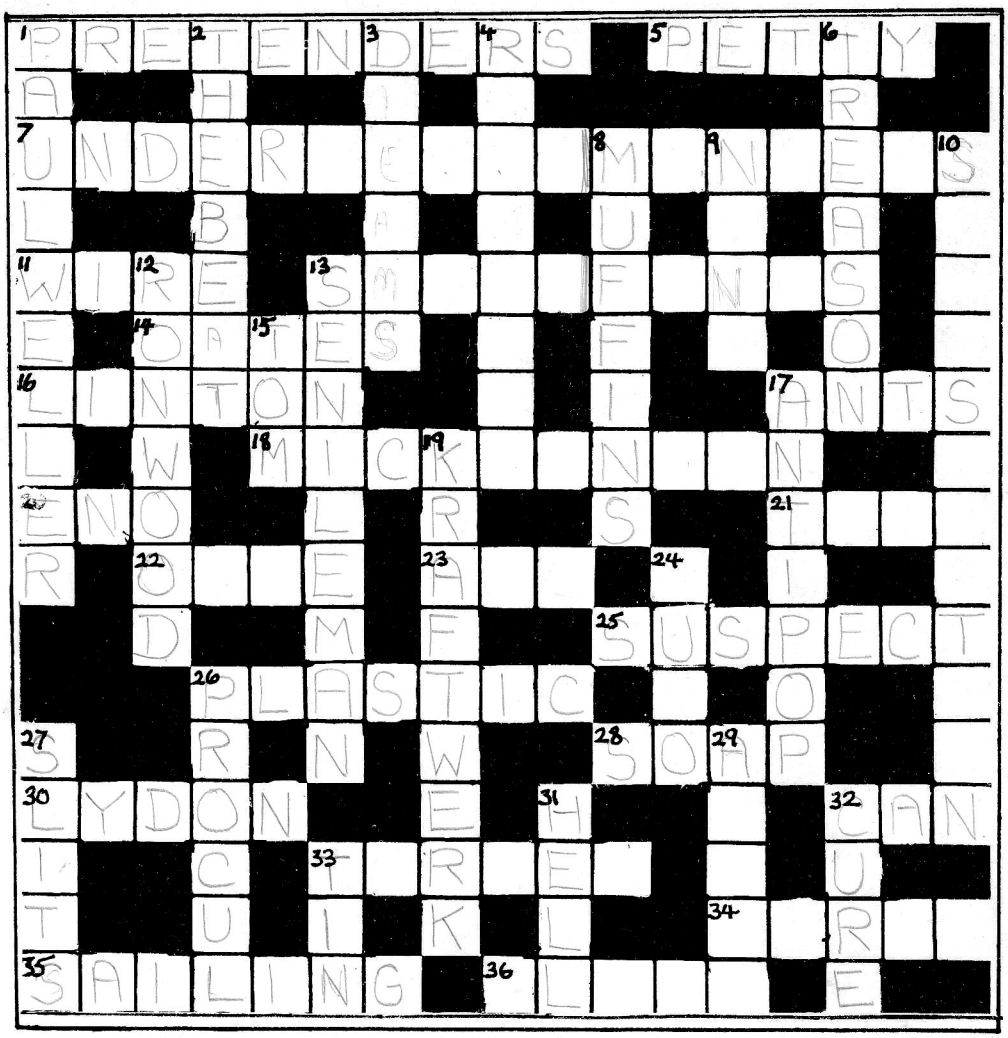
bondage trousers

TELL IT T-SHIRTS

TITS FOR HEAVY METAL, PUNK, MOD/2-TONE & PERSONALISED PRINTS.



12 Blenheim Street
NEWCASTLE upon TYNE
Tel (0632) 29847



Skelter Word:

ACROSS:

1. 'Brass In Pocket' band (10)
5. See 15 down
7. Part of Fripp's 'Drive To 81 (5,5,7)
11. 'Pink Flag' art-rockers (4)
13. 60's Mod band who's hits included 'All Or Nothing' (5,5)
14. Mr Hall is the other half of this US duo (5)
16. Forename of 'Dread, Beat and Blood' poet (6)
17. Adam's punky insects (4)
18. Ian Hunter's mate, made his name in Bowie's backing band (4,6)
20. His finer moments have been with Roxy, Bowie and Fripp (3)
21. and 33 down. Played the Acid Queen in the movie version of 'Tommy' (4,6)
22. J.J.Cale album (4)
23. Had big hit with 'How Long' some years ago (3)
25. SLF devices? (7)
26. Blondie's letters (7)
28. Magazine showed us the correct use of this product (4)
30. nee Johnny Rotten (5)
32. Kraut band of 'Tago Mago' fame. (3)
33. See 21 across.
34. The Grandpa of R&R (5)
35. Rod Stewart biggie (7)
36. Mr C, the myopic one (5)

DOWN:

1. Jam boss (4,6)
2. They just can't stop it. (3,4)
3. Fleetwood Mac hit of a couple of years back (6)
6. Teardrop Explodes classic independent (7)
8. Martha's 'Echo Beach' pals (7)
9. German lady involved with Andy Warhol and the Velvets (4)
10. Stones classic (12)
12. Guitarist with 10 down (3,4)
13. ATV vibed him up! (6,3)
15. and 5 across. The Heart-breaker who damned the torpedoes! (3, 5)
17. Newcastle's very own Bizzaros, featuring Arthur 2-stroke (4,3)
19. Influential German band who had hit with 'Autobahn' (9)
24. Mr Burnham of the Gang (4)
26. 'Whiter Shade of Pale' was their biggest hit (6)
27. In the beginning there was chaos! (5)
29. Black ___ , managed by Bernie Rhodes. (5)
31. Richard, originally in Television, later with The Voidoids (4)
32. 'A Forest' made it into the charts for them this year (4)
33. SLF soldiers? (3)

LOS

SABREJETS

IN A GREAT NEW DOUBLE A SINGLE...

THE STORY OF A BLUEPORT RECORD, BLUES, DISTRIBUTED BY SPARTAN & AVAILABLE AT ALL GOOD SHOPS

VOODOO CAVE / AT THE QUAYSIDE

FROM THE START THEY KNEW THEY'D FIND A FREEDOM THERE, AN ESCAPE FROM CRITICISM OF THEIR STYLES AND MUSIC AND CRAZES

IN THE MELODY MAKER...

"AN INTRIGUING BAND FROM NEWCASTLE VOODOO CAVE IS A JAZZY NUMBER THAT IS RATHER IMPRESSIVE, BUT AT THE QUAYSIDE WITH ITS SMASHING FEEL AND LACONIC LYRICS IS A GAS. THE SINGERS HAD A LETTER FROM BRIGITTE BARDOT, AND THE LADY SAYS THAT HE MUST BE OUT OF HIS MIND IF HE THINKS B.B. IS GOING TO GIVE UP THE SOUTH OF FRANCE FOR NEWCASTLE ON TYNE. LOVELY STUFF...."

MEANWHILE, IN NEXT BIG THING,

"THIS RECORD IS FAR TOO CLASSY FOR ANY KIND OF HUGE ACCEPTANCE (BUT BY ALL MEANS GO OUT AND BUY IT BY THE TRUCKLOAD AND PROVE ME WRONG). THE A SIDE REMINDS ME OF ALICE COOPER CIRCA GENERATION LANDSLIDE, WITH A LATINO BACKING, AND QUAYSIDE IS KINDA BELMONTSISH WITH HUMOROUS LYRICS. I LIKE THIS DISC A LOT!" WORD SPREAD FAST...

EVEN THE SULKY, SULTRY JANINE WAS IMPRESSED

SWINGERS AND HEPCATS FLOCKED TO BUY THE DISC. SOME SENT £1 (INCLUDING P+P) TO BLUEPORT, 52 KELVIN GROVE, SANDYFORD, N'CLE ON TYNE, AND GOT IT BY RETURN OF POST. BUT SOME SQUARES WERE NOT CONVINCED, AND HAD TO BE PERSUADED...

ACROSS THE NATION, IN CAT TALK AND BRUM BEAT...

TO BE CONTINUED